

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6594

As of January 28, 2010

Title: An act relating to commercializing research at state universities.

Brief Description: Regarding commercializing research at state universities.

Sponsors: Senators Kilmer, Zarelli, Kastama, Hobbs, Delvin, Marr, Murray and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/27/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: Washington State University (WSU) and the University of Washington (UW) actively participate in the development of innovations, based on institutional research, with commercial potential. These are typically near-market technologies that require additional work to make them ready for licensing or for a company start-up. The Washington State University Research Foundation was formed to facilitate the efficient transfer of technology, proprietary information, and inventions from WSU to the private sector for the benefit of WSU, the inventors, and society. Its primary purpose is to license technologies to private sector businesses, but it also assists faculty in finding investors for regional and local startup companies. At the UW, technology transfer efforts are supported by the Technology Gap Innovation Fund which comes from royalties and licensing income generated by UW technology transfer activities. The funds are used for grants encouraging additional research and prototype development to make innovations ready for commercialization.

The missions of WSU and the UW include teaching, research, and service. The emphasis placed upon each of these missions varies depending upon academic discipline, faculty expertise, and available state and federal funding. WSU and the UW identify their technology transfer efforts as contributors to their educational and service missions.

Summary of Bill: The commercialization of research that benefits the economic vitality of Washington, through research, company and job creation, and state economic development, is identified as a mission of WSU and the UW. To these ends, WSU and the UW must provide: (1) collaborative technology transfer opportunities; (2) opportunities for training

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

students through involvement in research and industry relations; and (3) a forum for interaction between the universities and the state's technology-based industries.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is an effort to increase commercialization opportunities at our research institutions. A hallmark of education is to involve students in research opportunities. This will allow us to showcase graduate student research.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kilmer, prime sponsor; Sherry Burkey, WWU; Jim Fridley, UW faculty.